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FURTHER REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON LIBERIA

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 813 (1993). Paragraphs 17, 18 and 19 of that resolution asked me to consider, in consultation with ECOWAS, convening a meeting of the Liberian parties to recommit themselves to implementing the Yamoussoukro IV Accord, to discuss with them and ECOWAS the contribution - including military observers - which the United Nations could make to that implementation and to report to the Security Council as soon as possible.

2. This report informs the Council of developments following my last report on Liberia of 12 March 1993 (S/25402). The report focuses on the negotiations among the Liberian parties which led to the Cotonou Agreement of 25 July 1993 and on the proposed role of the United Nations in the implementation of that Agreement. Observations and recommendations in this regard are to be found in the concluding section of the report.

I. NEGOTIATIONS ON THE LIBERIAN PEACE ACCORD

A. Preparations

3. The Special Representative for Liberia returned to the region on 4 April 1993 with instructions to prepare the ground for talks between the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO). He remained in the region throughout the recent period. In early discussions, it became evident that the Liberians wished very much to meet and resolve the conflict among themselves. In repeated visits to the Liberian parties, as well as to the Heads of State of West African countries, a provisional agenda for peace talks was prepared. The agenda was designed to meet the concerns of the individual parties and was consistent with the ECOWAS Peace Plan and the Yamoussoukro IV Accord.

4. Agreement on the agenda led to a request by the parties that I convene peace talks. After considerable discussion, the parties agreed to meet at United Nations headquarters in Geneva. Talks were held there during 10-17 July, at my

invitation, on behalf of President Nicephore Soglo, current Chairman of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) and Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity.

B The negotiations

5. The two most difficult issues in the negotiations were the composition and structure of the transitional government and the procedures for the encampment, disarmament and demobilization during the transition.

6. With respect to the structure of the transitional government, the parties agreed to establish a five-member collective executive body, the Council of State. It was also agreed that any individual who occupied a leadership position in the transitional government would not be eligible to present themselves as candidates in the elections to take place during the seven month transition period.

7. Given the level of mistrust existing between ECOMOG and the NPFL, special measures were devised to make ECOMOG acceptable to all parties in overseeing encampment, disarmament and demobilization. It was agreed that ECOMOG would be expanded to include new troops from countries not already participating in ECOMOG. These troops would be drawn from other ECOWAS countries, as well as from OAU countries outside of the West African subregion. In addition, it was proposed that United Nations military observers would monitor and verify the cease-fire as well as the implementation of the encampment, disarmament and demobilization provisions of the Agreement.

8. While some aspects of a framework settlement were agreed upon in Geneva, the difficulty and intensity of the negotiations led to the conclusion that the final agreement should be reached and a document signed by leaders of all the parties at an ECOWAS Summit meeting to be held in Cotonou on 22-24 July 1993.

II. THE COTONOU AGREEMENT

9. The Agreement was signed on 25 July 1993 in Cotonou in the presence of President Nicephore Soglo, the current Chairman of ECOWAS; the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, James O. C. Jonah, on my behalf; and Professor Canaan Banana, Eminent Person of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

10. The Agreement provides that a cease-fire and the cessation of hostilities would take effect 7 days from the date on which the Agreement was signed, that is, on 1 August 1993. ECOMOG would supervise and carry out the implementation of the Agreement, while monitoring and verification of the same would be effected by the United Nations. To ensure against any violation of the cease-fire between 1 August and the arrival of the additional ECOMOG troops and the main body of United Nations observers, the parties agreed to establish a Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee, comprising representatives of the three Liberian parties, ECOMOG and the United Nations. This body will be chaired by the United Nations. During this initial period, the United Nations has undertaken to consider dispatching thirty military observers to Liberia to participate in the work of the Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee.

11. On the political side, the parties agreed that there should be a single Liberian National Transitional Government which would have three branches (legislative, executive and judicial). The disposition of the Cabinet, Supreme Court, the Transitional Legislature and the Electoral Commission reflected the determination of the parties to emphasize the inclusionary character of the transitional period.

12. General and presidential elections are to take place within seven months from the signing of the Agreement. The Agreement provides details of the modalities for elections which will be supervised by a reconstituted Electoral Commission. At an earlier point, in February of 1992, when the organization of elections was under discussion, the Interim Government requested financial and technical assistance from the United Nations, as well as assistance for the despatch of international observers to observe the electoral process. Two consultants were sent to Liberia by the United Nations in May of 1992 to evaluate the availability of population data and the situation of constituency maps and to provide support to the Electoral Commission. Subsequently, the ECOWAS Summit, held at Dakar in July of 1992, invited the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to facilitate the verification and monitoring of the electoral process in Liberia by the United Nations. This request had been reiterated at previous ECOWAS meetings, but could not be met because of conditions in Liberia. The United Nations now stands ready to assist the reconstituted Electoral Commission, when it becomes operational, in the organization and conduct of free and fair elections.

13. Regarding humanitarian assistance, the Accord asks that all efforts should be made to deliver humanitarian assistance throughout Liberia, using the most direct routes and with inspection to ensure compliance with the sanctions and embargo provisions of the Agreement. The United Nations, in particular UNHCR, is requested to carry out all necessary planning and mobilization to facilitate the speedy return of refugees and their reintegration into their communities.

14. With a view of ensuring smooth and prompt implementation of the Cotonou Peace Accord, Under-Secretary-General James O. C. Jonah also signed a Memorandum of Understanding stating that the United Nations will use its best efforts to mobilize assistance for demobilizing soldiers who may have no other means of sustenance and that, in the interim period when such international donor support is being mobilized, the United Nations agrees to make use of NPFL food and medicine available in Côte d'Ivoire for NPFL's demobilizing soldiers.

III. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

15. I welcome the Agreement signed by the Liberian factions in Cotonou on 25 July 1993. While it would be less than prudent to underestimate the difficulties that will still undoubtedly be encountered, this Agreement, for which the Liberians themselves are largely responsible, offers the hope that the violent and destructive civil war which has afflicted Liberia may at long last be brought to an end.

16. In my previous report to the Security Council, I noted that there seemed to be consensus that the United Nations assume a larger role in the search for peace in Liberia. Throughout the period of the civil war, the United Nations

the struggle in Liberia. The appointment of my Special Representative, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, led to an intensification of the efforts on the part of the United Nations to promote national reconciliation in Liberia. I wish to commend Mr. Gordon-Somers for his persistence and skill in helping to create the conditions which allowed the parties to the conflict in Liberia to recognize that a return to peace was both feasible and desirable.

17. Liberia continues to represent an example of systematic and effective cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as envisaged in Chapter VIII of the Charter. The role of the United Nations has been a supportive one. Closest contact and consultation have been maintained with ECOWAS, which will continue to play the central role in the implementation of the peace agreement. The involvement and support of the Organization of African Unity in the search for peace has also been most useful. The United Nations has been requested by ECOWAS to establish a trust fund which could be utilized to enable African countries to be able to send reinforcements to ECOMOG and to provide necessary assistance to countries already participating in ECOMOG.

18. The future role of the United Nations, while continuing to be supportive in nature, is nevertheless crucial to the effective implementation of the Liberian Peace Agreement. Accordingly, it is my intention to commence planning for the dispatch to Liberia as soon as possible of an advance team of United Nations observers referred to in paragraph 10 above. I also intend to send immediately a technical team to Liberia to draw up detailed plans for the establishment of a United Nations observer mission in that country. Once this team has completed its work, a further report, containing specific recommendations and financial implications, will be submitted to the Council.

19. The rapid expansion of humanitarian assistance activities throughout Liberia will be an essential component in establishing conditions conducive to the successful implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement. Arrangements are already being made to mount relief convoys utilizing supplies currently available as soon as conditions permit. In addition, a consolidated inter-agency appeal will be issued shortly outlining estimated requirements for Liberia. This appeal will cover the traditional areas of humanitarian activities and also take into account requirements for implementing specific assistance programmes for the re-insertion of displaced persons, returnees and ex-combatants; initial assistance for the demobilization of ex-combatants; and technical assistance to the elections process. It is hoped that the international community will respond promptly and generously to the needs identified.